



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Department of Environmental Protection

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Commissioner

July 28, 2011

Mr. Charles Crowley
Mayor
City of Taunton
15 Summer Street
Taunton, MA 02870

Dear Mayor Crowley:


This letter is a response to your letter to David Cash dated May 26, 2011, in which you requested whether Taunton's latest proposal to replace the Taunton landfill when it closes would be consistent with the Solid Waste Master Plan with respect to the moratorium on new capacity for the combustion of mixed municipal solid waste (MSW). As described in your letter, the proposal includes the gasification of MSW, converting the resulting syngas to methanol, and then converting the methanol to liquid gasoline. This new approach would replace your previous proposal to use the syngas produced from the gasification of MSW as an input for fuel cell technology. It is my understanding that this new proposal continues to include a commitment to up-front recycling of 50-60% of MSW generated in the waste shed of the proposed facility and that 100% of MSW from the waste shed will be diverted from landfills.

Based on our review of the information provided to date relative to the gasification system as well as the processes for converting the syngas to methanol and the methanol to liquid gasoline, it appears that this project would not involve the combustion of mixed MSW and would, therefore, be consistent with the moratorium.

We commend you on the City's continuing efforts to develop a solid waste management plan that would significantly increase recycling and improve waste management in the City of Taunton and the region. However, I am concerned that this is the fourth approach that Taunton has proposed, and for a variety of reasons the previous three have turned out not to be viable. In addition, a report prepared by MassDEP titled "City of Taunton, Massachusetts and the Department of Environmental Protection, Solid Waste Facility Study, June, 2011" indicates that the site proposed for the previous proposals may not be suitable for a waste management facility of this size and type. Therefore, I strongly encourage you to thoroughly investigate financial and technical viability of the current approach, including the identification of a suitable site, before the City expends significant additional resources on this project.

MassDEP staff continues to be available to work with you as this project is developed.

Sincerely,


Ken Kimmell
Commissioner